

## **I-90 Two-way Transit and HOV Project**

### **BRIEFING PAPER**

Prepared for the

July 2004 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

Prepared by: Judy Giniger, Director, Public Transportation and Rail Division and

### **PURPOSE:**

This briefing will update the Commission about milestones reached and next steps in the process for approval of the project by the FHWA, Sound Transit and the parties to the 1976 Memorandum Agreement (MA). The Commission will be asked to consider approval of the project and an update to the MA after the parties and Sound Transit have executed the update and approved the project.

### **ACTION/OUTCOME:**

This briefing is informational and for purpose of discussion.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The I-90 project is an element of Sound Transit's 1996 *Sound Move* plan for constructing transit improvements and will add HOV lanes on the outer roadways to complete the HOV system between Seattle and Bellevue. The project is the first step in the vision to operate high capacity transit (HCT) exclusively in the center roadway and the permanent relocation of all vehicle traffic to the outer roadways. The ultimate project that will implement HCT on I-90 would be part of Sound Transit's *Phase 2* plan that must be approved by the voters before design and construction proceed. Sound Transit has already begun updating its current Vision to include *Phase 2* plans and it is expected that the Sound Transit board will adopt the vision and plan in spring 05.

Before proceeding with the project beyond the environmental phase and preparation of the design file, Sound Transit and the parties to the MA (cities of Seattle, Mercer Island and Bellevue, King County, and WSDOT) agreed that certain principles about further development of transit operations on I-90 between Seattle and Bellevue should be included in an amendment to the MA. It was also agreed that Sound Transit should be added as a party to the amendment because of its authority over regional transportation projects. Essentially, the principles state that the current project is the first step toward the exclusive HCT operation in the I-90 center roadway. Because construction of HCT will relocate all Mercer Island traffic from the center roadway to the outer roadways, the

amendment also states that prior to construction of HCT, measures will be taken to mitigate this effect on Mercer Island traffic. The proposed amendment largely confirms principles that the department has already agreed to in the MA.

In keeping with the intent of the MA and the Commission's position that it would not approve a major change in operation of I-90 without concurrence of all the parties, the amendment will not be presented to the Commission for consideration until after it has been executed by all of the other parties and Sound Transit. The FHWA has indicated that it will not issue a Record of Decision until after the Commission has taken action.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### Update on Amendment Approval Actions

Several parties have approved the amendment and others are still considering action. Bellevue City Council, King County Council and Seattle City Council have all approved the amendment. Mercer Island City Council and the Sound Transit Board have not acted on the amendment yet.

Mercer Island City Council has discussed the amendment at several previous meetings and is expected to vote at its meeting on August 2. The Mercer Island City Council and residents are concerned about equitable access for Mercer Island traffic to the outer roadways after conversion of the facility to HCT in the center roadway. This week, the council directed that a town hall meeting be scheduled before the August 2 council meeting so that public comment can be heard.

At this time, it is unknown whether the Sound Transit Board will approve the amendment and project prior to Mercer Island's action.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff has no recommendation at this time. A resolution will be presented for action after all parties have approved the project and the amendment to the MA.

For further information, contact: Judy Giniger, Director Public Transportation and Rail Division, (360) 705-7920.

**Attachment A**  
**Agenda**  
**WSDOT 2005-07 Operating and Capital Budget Request**  
**June Transportation Commission Meeting**

**Calendar**

**Budget Development – Review and Status Update**

**Pro Forma Update**

**Summary of Proposed Adjustments to Project Delivery through June 30, 2004**

**Capital Program – Project List Detail**

**Capital Programs**

Local Programs (Z)	Kathleen Davis	15 Min. Capital Project List
Rail (Y)	Judy Giniger	15 Min Capital Project List
Traffic Operations (Q)	Gummada Murthy Toby Rickman	15 Min Capital Project List
Capital Facilities (D)	Gummada Murthy Fred Debolt Ron Niemi	15 Min Capital Project List
Ferries Construction (W)	Sam Kuntz	30 Min. Capital Project List
Highway Improvements (I)	John Conrad	30 Min. Capital Project List
Highway Preservation (P)	John Conrad	30 Min. Capital Project List

**Attachment B**  
**Department of Transportation**  
2005-07 Budget Development Process

